

ADDRESS

701.121
1-2

OF

A Minister of the Church of England,

TO

HIS PARISHIONERS.

BY

ROBERT MORRES, M. A.

Vicar of Britford, Wilts.

Salisbury:

PRINTED BY B. C. COLLINS,

SOLD BY MESSRS. RIVINGTON, LONDON; FLETCHER AND
HANWELL, OXFORD.

—◆—
1799.

ADDRESS

A Member of the Church of England

THE UNIVERSITY

THE UNIVERSITY

40

6. 25

156



THIS Tract, first printed for the use of a particular Parish, is now published with some Corrections and Additions, in hope that it may be more generally useful. It is therefore respectfully inscribed to the Friends of true Religion and Government, who may think this attempt to promote the cause of Truth and Order worthy of their notice.

[Faint, illegible text, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side of the page]

ADDRESS.



MY CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,

SINCE it is the Duty of every Minister of the Gospel to benefit his Parishioners by all the means in his power, that are consistent with his sacred office, I feel myself to be called upon by the particular circumstances of the present time, to address you not only from the pulpit, but by a method of instruction that is more general, and more lasting. To those, who, from any difference of religious opinions, are not likely to receive instruction in the Church, this letter will, I hope, not be offensive; I wish it may be acceptable: to those who absent themselves from less excusable motives, it may be useful: to the rest, I trust that it will not appear to be idle or impertinent.

However



However it may be accepted, of this I am sure, that if I did not certainly know Religion, as it is professed by the Church of England, to be the only secret of peace of mind and comfort, and the only way to endless happiness after that this life is past, I would not profess it, or be a teacher of it. Nothing but a sure conviction that the rule of faith and manners which we preach, is above all things necessary to our well-being now and hereafter, could make me anxious for your obedience to it, or, I may add, careful of my own. It is my great and only wish, and that of every sincere Minister of the Gospel, that all men would enquire into it as diligently as they ought: and, surely, every one must think and feel, that if the covenant of the Gospel pretends to be offered from God to man, for such purposes, it is, at least, worth his while to attend seriously to it.

In the sacred history of the New Testament, written by sure witnesses, are related the wonderful actions of JESUS CHRIST. We therein learn, that He, whom we call our SAVIOUR, declared Himself to have come down from Heaven to teach men how they should live, to suffer death for the sinfulness of mankind, to promise a resurrection after death to eternal life, to assist them thenceforward to the end of the world in performing his commands. It is impossible, in hearing or reading the above history, to the doing of which I earnestly exhort you, not to be convinced, that He
 who

who did these wonderful works, and, lastly, raised Himself from the dead and ascended into Heaven, should not be whatever He professed Himself to be. And that He was so; that He was the Lord and Saviour and is hereafter to be the Judge of the world, the prophecies or predictions that were published concerning Him, thousands of years before his birth, from soon after the creation of the world until near the time when He was to appear on earth, make still more sure. These prophecies, we know, are contained in the Old Testament.

On these two great foundations, which are continually brought forward to your notice in the service of the Church; on the numerous, ancient prophecies, which nothing but the Eternal Wisdom of the Most High God could reveal, which were never applicable to more than one Person; on the wonderful works which that person performed, impossible for any but Almighty Power to perform; on these do we this day receive Jesus Christ as our Master and Lord. These are foundations, my brethren, plain to the perception of all, and such as no wit or learning can ever shake, no time can remove or impair, such as, before a man can honestly reject, he must unmake himself or throw away the common reason of his nature. On them have millions of men professed themselves to be Christians, from the time that the blessed Gospel was first published, unto the present day. And we surely
trust

trust that the belief and profession of Christianity, thus not founded on the wisdom of men, but on the Power of God, the covenant of mercy and immortal life, shall never cease from the earth.

Having therefore such reasons to give for acknowledging ourselves to be the disciples of Christ, and knowing also "the terrors of the Lord" revealed against those who resist the truth, we, the Ministers of this Religion, cannot but be serious and earnest "to persuade men." Appointed, as we are, through his authority, Stewards of the dispensation of his Gospel, woe be unto us if we be careles !

You will suffer me, therefore, led as I am by such motives, to address you at this time on some subjects, wherein I think advice and instruction to be especially useful and necessary to you.

But, before that I enter on them, I trust I shall have your thanks, if I undertake briefly to remove some errors which are known to have too much prevailed, especially of late, concerning the very causes and principles of the Christian life. I mean, *Faith*, and *the Grace of the Holy Spirit*. The word of God, which alone can give true wisdom, on these and all similar points, has been darkened and misrepresented by false teachers, men who do not understand it, and, I cannot but add, many who are not inclined to teach it in honesty and sincerity of mind.

FAITH,

FAITH, to us, is neither more nor less than a belief of what the Holy Scripture, particularly that of the New Testament, contains. Looking on this as the word of Almighty God, which hath been revealed to mankind in the several ages of the world, and handed down to the present, we give a full assent to the information which it conveys to us. Now we thence learn that there is one God, and one Redeemer of mankind from their offences, Jesus Christ. And, among other great truths, one which we are taught, is, that after our death we shall be raised again with our bodies, to live for ever in Heaven, if we make it our care in this life to obey the commands of our Lord Jesus Christ. Believing then this, and other such truths as are there made known to us, we are by them induced to become and profess ourselves to be Christians, or Disciples of the Redeemer. We accordingly make it the earnest business of our lives to do in all things as He hath enjoined; in the firm hope, that, by doing so, we shall have pardon for our sins, and be exalted to that everlasting glory which He hath promised. And then, finding, as often as we reflect on our ways, that we do sincerely endeavour to follow his precepts and example, and that we hope to become by degrees yet more perfect, we consequently feel a peace and joy of heart, which this world can neither give nor take away, for by this proof we know that we are in a state of salvation. "The tree

is," according to our Saviour's own direction, proved to be good by "the fruit" which it bears. Our Faith is demonstrated not to be "dead," because it causeth the effect of a good and holy life.

Let no man, my Brethren, ever seduce you from this plain account of Faith, or Belief; to which I shall now add a Doctrine, equally plain, concerning the Grace of the Holy Spirit. This is given us for no other purpose than to enable us to do that which our reason, if clear and unprejudiced, would admonish us to do, on considering what the Gospel has made known. It produces in us no other effects than what our Faith or Belief in Scripture would of itself cause, if our nature was not weak, and, unhappily, much inclined to evil: and it is not otherwise than by its effects distinguishable from the working of our own minds. It causes in us that *new birth*, or *regeneration*, which our Saviour told Nicodemus that it should, together with water, that is, Baptism, effect; that *change*, wrought in us and perfected by degrees, whereby, in a strong yet common figure of speech, we become "*new men*," different in our *affections*, *dispositions*, and *designs*, from what we are by nature only; "*created anew*," as it were, or "*renewed*" unto "*the image and likeness of God*," in which man was *at first* created (Gen. i. 26, 27, Coloss. iii. 10.) unto *righteousness* and *holiness*. The Spirit therefore,

as the Apostle says, (Rom. viii. 16.) bears witness with our spirit, "that we are the sons of God," not from sensible impressions, raptures, and ecstasies, but because, as he had said just before, "we through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body; for as many as are *led* by the Spirit of God, *they* are the sons of God." The witness then that the Spirit gives to our spirit is the consciousness that we lead a good life, in every branch of our duty to God and man, abstaining from all that is evil. This is, in scriptural language, to "mortify the deeds of the body," and "to live or walk after the spirit not after the flesh." And from this consciousness the Spirit suggests to every good Christian's spirit not to fear, but to look up to God with love and confidence, and "to cry, Abba, Father." What the deeds of the body or flesh are, and what the fruits of the Spirit, you may read in the 5th chapter of the same Apostle's Epistle to the Galatians, from verse 16th to verse the 23d. To conclude: we then certainly pretend, as much as any others, to have "the Spirit of God;" we are "filled by it with all joy and peace ^{and} believing;" we have the "love of God dwelling in us;" we "walk by faith;" we have "fellowship" with God and our Lord Jesus Christ; we have a full assurance of salvation. And we judge of the reality of our pretensions to those things by the sure rule which the Scripture hath given. "Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we

2 2

keep

keep His commandments. He that faith, I know Him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we that we are in Him." (1 John ii. 3, 5.) Let me then warn you, that to think we have the Spirit because of our feelings, alone or chiefly, however warm or strong, is to act contrarily to God's word. These may, let me further warn you, often be of a kind which you little suspect, very different from the effects of that Spirit, which "is first pure, then peaceable." To depend on such an evidence of the Spirit is a false and deceitful hope; leads to what is unbecoming towards God, and is disgusting in the sight of men, takes off our attention and care from the moral duties of life, and from "charity," which "is the end of the commandment;" and, lastly, as it is an evidence, which persons under misfortune and trouble of mind or weakness of body cannot always possess, it leads to doubt, distrust, and despair.

I now proceed to those important particulars of our common duty, on which in these days I think it especially seasonable to instruct and exhort you.

The first is the duty of public Prayer, neither justly valued nor rightly understood by many amongst us. Suffer me then to remark, that all are called upon to attend

attend it by every consideration which can be important to a man, and especially to a Christian. "Let us not," my Brethren, "forfake the assembling ourselves together, as the manner of some is." It is not a matter of idle form or ceremony: it is the debt of homage and worship due to God, as He is the Maker, the Ruler, and supreme Lord of all, who has a right to be publickly owned and adored as such; who will never excuse any from doing this constantly and regularly, for "them that honour Him will He honour, but those that despise Him shall be lightly esteemed, that is, rejected of him and punished. It is the natural, the necessary mean of securing to ourselves the favour of Him "in whom we live, and move, and have our being." It is the mean also appointed by Himself of bringing up, and confirming men in the way of truth and happiness, and reclaiming them to it. It is therefore so pleasing to God and our Saviour, that the latter hath said, "when two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." And hence our prayers in the public service of the Church, are, we may justly infer, more especially acceptable, and therefore more beneficial to ourselves, than even those which we offer in private.

But I have to add on this subject, that if you mean to procure for yourselves those blessings which the Almighty Power and infinite Mercy of God can bestow, you must *really and devoutly* join in the prayers that

that are offered up in the Church. No less absurd and brutish, than, I fear, common, is it for men to go to the Church, without attending to the business for which they go thither. Instead of *asking* for blessings on themselves and others, they seem careless hearers of the Prayers that are offered, and consequently, "have not, because they ask not." It is indeed no wonder, if those who do not consider the great ends of frequenting the Church, and are not duly aware of them, are even indifferent about going thither at all; unless it be, as is too usual, for the sake of hearing the Sermon, or, alas! for worse reasons. But let them understand, that those who are not interested in the Prayers, are not likely to receive from the best Sermons any real or lasting advantage. They may gratify curiosity, may please themselves with judging of the merits of a Preacher, may even be affected, very deeply for a moment, but will never reform a single fault, or make the least progress towards perfection. Yet every thing short of these, and of the great business of Prayer, is very far indeed from the mark and purpose of these solemnities.

Under this head I should also, in few words, include Family-Prayer. In all families, where the master or some other person is able to read a few prayers discreetly selected from the Common Prayer Book, I exhort you to it as an important Christian duty, which is too often neglected. It is, in the next degree to
public

public worship, advantageous for all the ends which recommend *that* to our practice. It, as it were, consecrates every house to God's service, and draws down a blessing on it. As to the time to be spent in this duty, this is to be suited to the convenience of every family. Indeed I wish to remark, that a *few* prayers, decently and earnestly offered up, are infinitely preferable to a great many hastily read over. Nor do I mean to confine you to the use of the Book of Common Prayer, if you give a preference to any of those forms of family devotion, which pious and discreet men have published.

Private Prayer is our next concern. As the public supplications in the Church respect our common wants; private Prayer implores also such particular blessings, as each individual among us may need for himself, his family, and friends. It is likewise continual and daily, and is in every man's own power, even if he be deprived of the means of frequenting the Church, or enjoy not the opportunity of family devotions; and may be offered as each man has need, on all occasions, at all times, in all places, and in any form or manner of uttering it. To the habitual use of this let me very earnestly exhort you: yet it almost appears absurd to think that any one wants to be exhorted to what is *evidently necessary*, and is so glorious a privilege to men. To be in the daily
practice

practice of speaking unto the Almighty Author of our existence, about ourselves and our desires; of holding that communion with Him now on earth, which shall hereafter constitute our happiness in Heaven, is such a privilege, as no reasonable being can bear to be deprived of. Strange, that our weakness, our various wants which we are solicitous to supply, our sorrows and calamities which often no aid of men can remove, should not in this world teach us to look up to the Maker and Disposer of all, who “as a father pitieth his children, is merciful to those that fear him!” Strange indeed, that we wilfully depart from Him, in whom we all “live, and move, and have our being!” But stranger still, that Christians, who call themselves such, in the hope of deriving happiness in Heaven from His presence, should avoid or neglect a communion with Him on earth!

Let us consider that private Prayer and pious reflection are the food and life of our holiness. The habitual use of these is therefore necessary to our being Christians in deed, and not in name only. And it has been remarked, that as long as we continue in the use of these, and no longer, we may continue to hope that we either are right or shall become so. Next to prayer, Reflection is the most necessary to us, and the most natural of all things. By this I mean reflection on those things which we *believe*, and on what we *ought to do*. Surely we should think on that
supreme

suprem
 though
 owing
 which
 on the
 interest
 actions
 we are
 approx

And
 articles
 them,
 obey,
 business
 cerns u
 omits t
 a fooli

I am
 may co
 of dela
 may fo
 an hou
 Reason
 putting
 and he
 knows
 tance,
 unless

supreme Nature, those adorable Persons, to whom, though unseen, all that we are, have, or hope for, is owing; on those awful transactions, relating to us, which we believe from Scripture to have taken place, on those future events, which we believe to be most interesting to us, the state in which according to our actions here we are to live unto all eternity; to which we are every day, and we know not how speedily, approaching.

And whoever, from time to time, thinks on the great articles of his Faith or Belief, and is duly affected by them, cannot but next consider the Law given him to obey, and compare his conduct with it. In short, our business here is to call frequently to mind why it concerns us to be good, and whether we are so. He who omits to do these two things, as long as he lives, acts a foolish and unnatural part.

I am here, in conclusion, led to warn any whom it may concern, against a wretched and absurd purpose of delaying such reflection, and the repentance that may follow it, to a *future time*. He who delays this an hour, thereby lessens his chance of becoming what Reason and Duty require him to be: the design of putting it off till another opportunity, is itself a sin: and he who defers it till old age and death approach, knows not what Religion is. What he calls Repentance, is none: nor will any avail him, at any time, unless it be very different from what he himself

designs it to be, very different from what all those are thought to attain, who close a bad or careless life with expressions of sorrow, which their fears extort, and who die contented with this miserable and idle ceremony of, what is termed, a death-bed Repentance.

The third object of my Address to you are the *Sacraments*, as they are called, of the Christian covenant. Of these the first is *Baptism*. As this is little understood by many, and is misrepresented by those among us who say that infants are not to be baptised, I request your attention to the plain account which I shall give you of it, according to Scripture and ancient History.

Baptism is the form of admission into the Covenant with God, which is by Jesus Christ. The former covenants with the Most High, as all the great acts of his Providence, were, as we know, designed to prepare the world for this last universal covenant with mankind. And as the covenant itself, and every important part of it, were before shadowed out and represented in the former covenant with God through Moses, this solemn rite was therein represented by Circumcision, the form of admission into that covenant. Both these forms have been appointed by the authority of God; who, because He may be as gracious as He pleaseth, may grant a covenant or agreement, for any blessings,
to

to any of his creatures, without any claim of right on their part. Indeed, after the fall of our first parents, and the corruptness of our nature which was caused by it, there was no longer any claim of right left on our part: we have been all born the children of wrath. Now, the Jewish Covenant and the Christian so far agree with one another. Because Abraham offered up *Isaac* at God's command, the Almighty was pleased to make a covenant with all his posterity; whereby the *Divine Favour and Protection*, and an inheritance in the land of *Canaan*, were adjudged to be given to them: and circumcision was appointed to be the seal and sign of that covenant unto all to whom it was granted; as among men the signing and sealing of any agreement gives being and force to the agreement. This, as I have said, was a transaction designed to prefigure or shew forth the second covenant with all mankind in the Gospel, under which we live. Since, because the Son of God, our blessed Redeemer, offered up *Himself* on the cross, the Almighty Father has been pleased to make this last covenant; whereby his favour, and an inheritance after this life in *Heaven*, our blessed *Canaan*, are pledged to be given to us: and Baptism is the seal of this covenant, and is in the New Testament shewn to be the circumcision of Christ, that is, of his appointment. Coloss. ii. 11, 12.

What then? was not circumcision, by God's command, administered to infants on the eighth day after their birth? Do we not rightly then come to this

conclusion; that in admitting infants to Baptism also, as soon as they can bear it, we have the example and authority of God Himself for doing so?

That no man may have to say, that there is *any difference between the two covenants* as to this matter, let me remind you that they are quite parallel in all respects. The *conditions* of both are perfectly alike. The personal consent and obedience of every individual who entered the first covenant, were as requisite as they are for those who enter into the second. Yet *God ordered*, that infants, who could not make any choice for themselves, were to be brought by their parents into covenant with Him: and as God ordained, so we do. Surely it is brutish not to perceive, that every thing created is to be brought without doubt or delay into a covenant with it's Maker. It is most plainly the duty of a child's parents to provide this benefit, as much as it is to enter into any bargain evidently requisite and advantageous in his worldly concerns, or to procure any other necessities for it. It would be as reasonable to let it want any other thing needful for it, till it could choose for itself, as this which is the "one thing needful."

Faith before Baptism was and is necessary for persons of full age, converted from infidelity. This is too plain and reasonable to be questioned. But it is not therefore absurd, that *infants* should be baptized before they are capable of faith, and should afterwards be

be brought up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." The Almighty was pleased to grant his blessing to children covenanted with him by circumcision: and now He in like manner bleſſes our endeavours to render thoſe who are in covenant with Him by Baptiſm, worthy of Him. They become true and actual believers by degrees, as their reaſon opens to the perception of the firſt ſimple truths of Religion; as they afterwards daily advance in the knowledge and in the practice of the Goſpel: till, at length, being arrived at that proficiency and that age, when they can take up a reſolution to perſevere in a religious life, they make it publicly in the ſolemn rite of Confirmation, and are thenceforward admitted to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Let us alſo remember, that the future condition of the child, as he grew up, was the ſame under the Law, as it is now under the Goſpel. If he then took up and perſevered in a reſolution of keeping the terms of the covenant, he continued to enjoy its promiſed bleſſings: if he reſuſed, he was rejected by God; his circumciſion became uncircumciſion. And exactly ſo it is alſo now: Baptiſm availeth nothing, if the Chriſtian does not fulfil the terms of the Chriſtian Covenant.

Wherefore, to conclude this parallel between the two covenants: Both are *the free bounty* of the Moſt High, who may *therefore* give the advantages of it to children

children as well as to grown persons; to those who cannot accept the offer of them, as well as to those who can: and neither class have any title or claim from their own merit. Let us, lastly, remember, that the advantages of both covenants are *alike necessary* to children and to those of mature years. They are not to be postponed a moment beyond the first convenient opportunity of procuring them; certainly not until years of discretion. To the Jewish children, the advantages of their covenant were, from the moment of circumcision, a deliverance from the wrath and temporal judgment of God, to which they were liable; together with advantages of every kind which one child could possess beyond another. To Christian children are secured by Baptism privileges after the same manner, but infinitely more valuable. They have an immediate deliverance from that wrath of God here and hereafter, under which every man is born: we are, as the Scriptures teach, born of a corrupted nature, sinful before God, incapable of being accepted by Him. We may, if we are not blind, see this in the very first propensities and actions of infancy; and thence may too surely trace more and more, as children grow up, in thousands of instances, the working of a perverse and evil principle. From the guilt and pollution of this, Baptism, by the merits of Christ's death, is appointed by Him to deliver us. But without Baptism, if the child should die, he dies

in his sins. This doctrine is plain: how *interesting* also it is, let every parent consider.

To proceed: when our Lord therefore gave command to his Apostles, "Go ye and teach, or make disciples of, all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," the Apostles certainly understood that those who should be converted, were to be baptised themselves and also their children; for such had been the appointment of God in circumcision, to which, being Jews, they were accustomed. If the Almighty then had designed to make an alteration for the future in his dealing with infants, He would doubtless have then declared it: but this He did not do, as far as we can learn from Scripture. Nor indeed can we suppose that our Heavenly Father would be less gracious to them under the blessed covenant of Mercy, than He had been under that of the Jewish Law.

We, farther, learn from history, that the Jews had (and have to this day) a custom of *baptizing* as well as circumcising the children of those Heathens who were converted to the worship of the true God. This seems to have been the case before our Saviour's time, and is pretended to have been practised by Moses himself. And hence, they expected, when Elias, who was in their opinion to be the fore-runner of the Messiah, or when the Messiah Himself should come to establish a new covenant, they should be baptised
into

into it. When John the Baptist therefore baptised, and yet denied that he was either Elias or Christ, they asked, " why baptisest thou them ? " Wherefore our Lord, who adopted the Jewish custom of baptising, and used it in the room of circumcision, as He is nowhere related to have made any change in regard to infants, must be supposed not to exclude them. It is not, then, to be argued, that the Scripture of the New Testament, which does not mention the instances of any infants that were baptised, at all means that they were excluded. The only reason why they are not particularly related to have been baptised, is, that it was an universal, established, and well known custom, that they were baptised along with their parents. It was not needful to mention them; while the Baptism of the parents was mentioned, because that would shew the *success of the Gospel* in converting those who had been brought up and lived in other religions. When we therefore read of a man being converted and baptised with his household, we are certainly designed to understand, that the children were included.

The last thing on this part of the subject which I have to mention, is, that the *Church of Christ*, as far as appears from history, has constantly admitted infants to Baptism. Wherefore they, who in these *latter days* have refused it to them, have departed from the practice of all the ancient disciples of our

Lord ;

Lord; who cannot yet but be supposed to have followed the direction and example of the Apostles themselves.

Let me now ask any parents among you, whether, after this account of the authority under which we act, they can bear the thought, that their children should die, as they too easily may in their early years, under the general sentence of *God's wrath*? whether they can have the heart to deny them those privileges which our Church affirms this Sacrament to bring, viz. to be made "*Members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of Heaven*?"

After having thus shewn the main pretence, on which Anabaptists forsake the Church, to be contrary to Scripture, I have no need to say much on any other argument. They assert further, that the Immersion *of the whole body* in water is necessary to Baptism. But, in truth, this is so obviously a matter of *Jewish superstition*, rather than of *Christian observance*, that it deserves little or no regard. For had even our blessed Lord's Apostles and their Disciples been expressly said to have thus, *generally*, baptised, I admonish you, that it would not have rendered such a particular form necessary to other persons under *different circumstances*. If difficulty of providing sufficient water, ill health, or any similar accident should have been in the way, Christian Liberty and Reasonableness

D

would

would have dispensed with it. For, observe, our Lord's sole command in the institution of Baptism was, "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." *To baptize* in these names is all that is requisite. What then is it to baptize? It is to "*wash*," in whatever manner that was performed. Hence we read, in the original language of the New Testament, of *baptizing* before meals after returning from the market, and of *baptizing* cups, pots, brazen vessels, and tables, which those who translated it into our language, have rendered *washing*. From these passages it also appears that to baptize was a religious ceremony or act of *purifying*: and to baptize persons was designed to represent their purification from a moral pollution before contracted. And hence, that I may be brief, Christian Baptism to men converted from a false Religion was to represent an inward purification from all their former bad habits and dispositions of mind, which were now forgiven and done away.

This being the import and meaning of water in Baptism, nothing is *necessarily* required, but that it should be used agreeable thereto, so as to convey this signification. If therefore *sprinkling* does this, it performs all that is necessary and essential to the purpose; and immersion or *dipping* does no more. And I repeat, that to lay any stress or make a conscience of rejecting

rejecting either mode is not according to the reasonable liberty of Christians; or it is to act according to the temper of the Pharisees, who dwell not on the spirit but on the letter of the law.

I do not mean by this to express any doubt that in many instances, even generally, Baptism was anciently performed by dipping the whole body. But on the other hand I am also persuaded, that even in the Apostles' time, there were exceptions. For we read not only of three thousand being baptised in one day, of Cornelius's household, (when St. Peter seems to speak of water being brought for Baptism,) and of the baptising of women, but of Baptism having been administered to the keeper of a prison and his household in the prison at midnight. And what, may we ask, must have been the case of those who were baptised in sickness, or even on their death bed?

All that I think it necessary to add on this subject is a plain, and, I should suppose, a satisfactory reason, why Baptism was *ever* performed by immersion or dipping the whole body. It was merely because it was the *ordinary* practice of the inhabitants of eastern climates so to wash and cleanse their persons. This we know from history. In those hot climates, health, decency, and comfort required it. What, therefore, was necessary to cleanliness, could not but with the utmost propriety be one common way at least of a ceremony, whose sole end is to represent and shadow

out the new purity and holiness of the person baptised. What is the plain consequence of this, but that in any *other* country, where such a method of cleansing the person is not in common use, such a method of Baptism has no reasonableness or propriety? It is with the strictest reason, therefore, that in these northern climates, we adopt that ceremony which is suitable to our usual manner of cleaning the person. Since this being all that cleanliness generally requires, it is fully significant of the end of Baptism, the inward purity that is expressed by it. This is the true rational imitation of the Apostolical example, and must especially appear so to those who consider the many exceptions to their general rule above noticed, and the reasons that may be drawn from considerations of health and decorum.

I leave now the whole subject to the calm judgment of every sincere man who has been led by the errors of a new sect, unheard of till late times, to cast himself off from the communion of the Church of his country.

On the other Sacrament also, the *Lord's Supper*, the Ministers of the Gospel have too much occasion to exhort their Parishioners. This institution, ordained just before his death by the Saviour of the world, in order

order that all should shew a grateful remembrance of what He suffered for them, is neglected or refused by very many of those who call themselves Christians. Many excellent books have been written, and numberless discourses preached, to shew that this behaviour is unreasonable and inexcusable. And, on my part, I earnestly intreat you, not to think yourselves safe in following your own or others errors in this important matter, but to attend to a few remarks which I shall here lay before you. When you have considered these, then ask yourselves, why should I not go to the Lord's table? Can I or any other person be safe in staying away?

First then, to receive this Sacrament is not the privilege or duty of any Christians *in particular*: it belongs universally to all, to one as much as to another. We are all Christians *equally*, are all *alike* saved by our Redeemer's sufferings, and therefore all alike have a common right in partaking of this remembrance of them. Birth, fortune, education, and knowledge make no difference between us. The Gospel was preached to the *poor*; and all its concerns, its duties, and its privileges belong to them, fully as much as to the rich, learned, and noble. Whoever therefore neglects to receive this Sacrament, neglects his *common* duty as a Christian, and let him remember, that he who refuses to obey *any one* command of his Saviour, "*is none of his.*"

Secondly,

Secondly, to receive this Sacrament worthily, is in every Christian's power. It cannot indeed but appear to you, that what your merciful Saviour has commanded you to do, is safe and practicable. If then any books written by men, or any conversation with men, have made you think otherwise, you may be sure, either that you have mistaken them, or that they have not taught you discreetly, and according to God's word. The only preparation necessary, is, to consider with honest care, whether you do sincerely endeavour above all things to obey the commands which our Saviour has delivered in the Gospel. He who does this, and earnestly resolves, by God's grace, to cease from all that he does amiss, is a worthy partaker of the Lord's Supper. You see then that this preparation is easy to be performed by all of you. It may be made almost every day of your lives; often in the midst of your daily employment: it requires no ceremony or form.

It will now appear to you, and I wish much to remind you, that such an examination of our own ways would be our necessary concern, whether there were any sacrament or not. For, since it is our main business in this life so to live as that we may hope for happiness hereafter, it is our continual concern also to be satisfied that we do so live. Every day therefore, at least every returning Sabbath, it is our great interest to consider, whether we are going on aright in our
conduct

conduct towards God and our Redeemer, in all concerns with our neighbour, and in the management of ourselves. Whoever needs any help in making this examination, may learn the several branches of his duty from the Church Catechism, in the answers to the questions, what is thy duty towards God? what is thy duty towards thy neighbour?

It follows, thirdly, that all sins, against which we honestly strive, and, much more the defects which arise from mere infirmity, are no bar against our receiving the Sacrament worthily. How great soever they may be, under whatever circumstances of life, they are no impediment. It is strange, that they should have appeared to be so to sincere Christians, and that any but men careless of their Christian duties should say so. Too many of these, alas! are ready with such like excuses. But I will ask one question, which shall put this matter out of all doubt. If you should *die*, will your sins, against which you resolve and honestly strive, or your infirmities, cause your eternal condemnation, and cast you into Hell? you will say, "God forbid: we hope to be saved through Christ." My answer then is short and plain: "what will not condemn you then, does not condemn you now." And then, if you are worthy of *Heaven* through Christ, should you die now, you cannot surely doubt that you are worthy of the Lord's Table.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, I have to remind you, that, even to those who presume to receive unworthily, the *damnation* incurred by it, is not *eternal* damnation. Look into the Communion Service of our Church, or into the eleventh chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, and you will find that a punishment in *this* life only is spoken of. To be "weak and sickly;" "to sleep," that is, "to die;" "to be plagued with divers diseases and sundry kinds of death;" "to be hardened as Judas was;" are the consequences which may, if God so please, arise from this damnation. So far is it from eternal damnation, that, as St. Paul informs us, "when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should *not* be condemned with the world." It is indeed a sin to affront the Memorial of the crucified Body of our Redeemer, either by irreverence, as did the Corinthians, or by appearing at the altar with those sins, unrepented of, for which Christ died. This the Apostle calls not to "discern," that is, not to pay due regard to the Lord's body. I would not wish any one to think lightly of it; but, at the same time remember, that no conscientious person *can be* guilty of this sin; and that wicked irreligious men, who *are* guilty of it, are capable of repentance and pardon for it, as well as for other crimes.

Fifthly, I call upon you to consider whether any one of us can live as good Christians without this Sacrament.

Sacrament. Consider, that in it we have the pledge of our Pardon for the sins and failings which we all commit from day to day, and the Grace of God's Holy Spirit to assist us in leading a good life ; that, in short, we derive by means of this Sacrament all that a communion with our Heavenly Father and our Redeemer can procure to us.

I know but of one error more, which I am called upon to notice. This is an opinion, that those who communicate, are obliged afterwards to be, as it is expressed, very *particular* in their lives ; and people are afraid to receive the Sacrament, lest by doing something amiss afterwards they should endanger their salvation. But the plain truth is, that the Sacrament binds you to no more than you are already bound to do without it. Nothing but what your Baptism requires of you, the common duty of all Christians, is enjoined by the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. It does not exact of you, that you should at once be unerring and faultless, or even as perfect as those who have arrived at a greater excellence than you have hitherto been able to do. It only requires you to do what it supplies you with strength to do, to proceed by degrees in Christian Improvement ; " to cease to do evil, to learn to do well," and to do this better as you grow older. Continue therefore patiently in your sincere endeavour to become more perfect in all good ; and let not any error or fault you may fall into after

receiving the Sacrament, have any other effect than to make you more afflicted at it, resolved to be more diligent in avoiding it, desirous of again receiving the solemn pledge of your pardon, and of procuring at the same time the Divine assistance, without which you can never finally succeed.

Let me now then intreat, if there be any gratitude to your Redeemer, any desire of sharing in the blessings of his Divine Covenant, any fellowship with those who are members of his Church here, and hope to meet in his blessed Kingdom hereafter, that you will not any longer neglect this *necessary*, this *universal* duty. You may see that there is no reason at all which you can plead for your neglect; for, to sum up what I have written, unless you are qualified, or qualify yourselves to receive the Lord's Supper, you are not in a state *to be saved*; unless you do receive it, (I mean, if you have an opportunity offered to you,) you disobey your Saviour, and will die in your sins.

The consideration of the foregoing subjects leads me to say here a few words concerning the nature of the *Church of Christ*, as it is established in this country. I trust that what I shall state, will cause in some a greater reverence than what they now bear towards that which is the sanctuary of all our Christian Privileges, "the Pillar and Ground of Truth."

The

The Church is a community of persons called and elected from the world into a covenant of everlasting salvation, through Jesus Christ. This we read at the beginning and in other places of almost every Epistle in the New Testament. It is the common language of Scripture; and it is especially confirmed by the first account of its institution in the book of the Acts of the Apostles. "And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved." (Chap. ii. ver. 47.)

You will then, first, observe by the way, that those only are in the word of God said to be the "*called*," "*elect*," or "*chosen*," and in other places, "*saints*," who were publickly and solemnly joined to the Church by Baptism, and were afterwards constant partakers together, as members of the same spiritual body, of the same doctrine, the same worship, and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. For it was by water as well as by the spirit that all men were to be born again. No inward impulse or motion of mind, no sanctity, no knowledge, no faith or virtue could make men Christians without a conformity to that order and rule which Jesus Christ had appointed to his Church.

In the same manner, as it is most important to notice, in other passages we learn, that the *Ministers* of this Church of Christ were none of them called to their office without ordination from their superiors. The Scripture teacheth that none taketh this

honour "to himself, but he only receiveth it that is called, as was Aaron," who was called by an exprefs order from God, and was solemnly *ordained* to the Priesthood. (Heb. v. 4.) Nay, the Apostle adds, so "also Christ did not" appoint "Himself, but He that said unto Him, thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." And Christ, we know, called by name his twelve Apostles, gave them their charge and authority, and, by an ordination peculiar to himself, "breathed on them and said unto them, receive ye the Holy Ghost." St. Paul, who was "called from his mother's womb," that is, in the purpose of God, was appointed and ordained ~~in~~^{by} a glorious appearance of Christ, and the words that were then spoken to him. Afterwards the Deacons received solemn ordination from the Apostles; and, in the Epistles to Titus and Timothy, we read of the usual form of ordaining Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, by imposition of hands and prayer. Lastly, this form of ordination thus begun has been continued from that time to this day. The Roman Church, from which we derive our ordination, was founded by the Apostles; and though in the course of time it has been corrupted in its doctrine and worship, the ordination of its Ministers has always been observed according to Scripture, and is undoubtedly valid and good. And therefore the Bishops of the English Church at the Reformation had a lawful power of
of

of ordaining those, from whom the Ministers of the Church at the present moment are descended.

It must be plain to you what I mean to shew from these remarks. The English Church is a *true Church of Christ*. It is built on the Apostles and Prophets, JESUS CHRIST Himself being the chief Corner Stone. Our Bishops are successors of the Apostles, and our Ministers duly ordained by them; and the congregations that are instructed and led by them fulfil the description given in Scripture of the primitive Church, "continuing in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in breaking of bread" (i. e. the holy bread) "and in prayer." Within our national Church are therefore truly contained the treasures and privileges of the Christian covenant. In it are the font of Baptism, the table of the Lord, the keys, or power of censure and absolution, the promised presence of its ever-blessed Head and Ruler, and every general or special blessing that He hath bequeathed to his Church. We do as truly, assuredly, and fully partake of all these, as the members of that first Church which the Apostles themselves after our Lord's death founded at Jerusalem.

And if it is so: since no blessings of the Christian covenant are promised to any that are not within the Church originally constituted by our Lord and his Apostles, and preserved in the world according to his predictions, I now leave the consideration of this to
those

those among us who wilfully throw themselves out of it, and to all others who are in danger of being deceived by them.

I certainly indeed do not mean, that those, who have not the opportunity of belonging to the Christian Church, are concerned in the guilt and condemnation hereby incurred. We do not condemn even any individuals, who in the sincerity of their heart, after all the consideration of which they are capable, are deceived. We leave them, as we must, to the mercy of one to whom they must stand or fall: but we have to remind them, that they are not members of that Church which their Lord and Saviour hath founded. This point is already plain, and needs not be further shewn. By the labour of God's ministers, with the aid of those in authority, the Church of Christ has been duly established in this country. Happy ought we to be therefore, and it is the plain duty of all, to enter immediately into it, and continue stedfastly in it. And there can in any one country be but one Church of Christ; as there is but "one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all." As soon as it hath been constituted, on the authority of God's word, it has a claim to every man's conformity and communion. And farther, the cause of order, peace, unity, and brotherly love calls on every Christian to maintain it against the attempts of all who would
cause

cause schisms and divisions against it. Besides, harmony in opinion and practice is not more conducive to the preservation and increase of faith and virtue, or of any common concern among men, than it is agreeable to the spirit and temper of the Gospel, and required by the express injunction of its inspired preachers. Those among us who talk of the right of private opinion, and of worshipping God in their own way, might be more wise if they would hear St. Paul. He thus earnestly reproveth the Corinthian Christians; "Now I beseech you, Brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment." Certainly then are those condemned, who without absolute necessity (of which hereafter) forsake the communion of the national Church; and still more those who set up congregations in opposition, and those who openly slander and revile it. Nor, lastly, are those free from guilt, who *in part* withdrew themselves, and give any the least sanction to the cause of schism or disunion.

From what has been said, those therefore that abandon the established Church, are called upon to consider what they leave, and to what they go. They leave the true *Church of Christ*, planted in this country in obedience to his will and command, by his appointed

appointed servants, and, as at the first establishment of it in the world, watered with the blood of his holy martyrs. They go to those *self-instituted assemblies or meetings*, where there is no one appointed by Christ to exercise any Ministry at all; where every pretension is false and unfounded; meetings, which are totally void of all title from the Scripture to be a Christian Church. And since this is so, it matters nothing what may be said to be the learning, the ability, or even the zeal and fervour of either the teacher or the people. Nothing that they are or may do, can make them to be other than individuals deserting the Church of their Redeemer, to which by his commands they owe a faithful adherence.

After the consideration of what was said at the beginning of this topick, we may fairly demand to hear no more of pretensions to *secret Calls and Inspirations*; pretensions, which every man may make, but no man can prove either to himself or others. They are most assuredly the grossest delusion ever conceived, or the most villainous imposture ever practised on the world. Surely we all know, what a weak head and warm temper may make men fancy of themselves; and I am not to remind you what designing men may impose on others. I have shewn the title and claim which such men set up to the Ministry of God's word, to be contrary to Scripture. For no inspired Preacher or Minister of the Gospel,
from

from our blessed Redeemer himself to the lowest among those mentioned in the New Testament, assumed this office to himself, but was solemnly authorised. In truth, it is plain as Scripture and common sense can make it, that a man may as well think himself *called* to be a *Magistrate*, without an appointment from the supreme Power of any country, as to be a *Minister of the Gospel*, without a publick appointment from those whom Christ has left to govern his Church on earth to the end of time.

I am not here willing to represent how grossly incapable many of these presumptuous teachers are, what and how pernicious are the errors they spread, and still less with what unworthy views too many of them are believed to set up their congregations. I abstain from these topicks, because it is sufficient to have shewn that they *are not Ministers of Christ*, nor their hearers any part of *his Church*. They may therefore, as they do, please themselves with their own inventions; but there is surely no other way of pleasing Christ, but by acting in obedience to his laws and ordinances. Let them therefore consider, that they all are exposed to his *displeasure*; they are liable to his *judgments*. On them lies the first blame of the envy, strife, uncharitableness, and of the prejudice and scandal against the Church and

Gospel

Gospel of Christ, which their causeless separation from us hath long and continually occasioned.

I say *causeless*; for I now proceed to maintain that there is no sufficient cause of separation. To be concise, it is plain that nothing short of *criminality and sinfulness*, in a communion with the established Church, nothing but what would render a separation *absolutely necessary to salvation* can justify it. The Church is founded on the authority and according to the express injunction of Christ for the salvation of men: and therefore, unless that end be defeated by it, it is not for any man to abandon it or set himself up against it.

And who among us thinks that any member of the Church of England, who partakes of its rites and worship, and faithfully practises the rule of faith and manners which he learns from his communion with it, shall not assuredly be saved through the merits of Him who is the only *supreme Head and Ruler of it*? The answer to this question will, unless I greatly err, decide the point for ever.

But we are indeed told, that we continue to be separated from the Church of Rome, only because it is *corrupt*; and that therefore, if any one dislike the ceremonies or doctrine of the Church, he has our example to plead for withdrawing himself. I answer, no; not till he can make out his case to be similar to our's.

our's. And that it cannot be so, he will see, if he learn on what we found the Reformation in this kingdom. We then justify our separation, because,

1. The Bishop of Rome has no right or authority whatever over the Church of any other country. And therefore we most justly renounce a dominion which he had no right to claim. And whoever has read in our history of the wealth which the Popes drew from this country, of the tyranny which they exercised, of the foreign and civil wars and broils which they caused, cannot fail to see the farther motive which existed for rejecting their usurpation.
2. Having then asserted the power of establishing our own Church, we not only had a right, but were indeed bound to reject every corruption of God's word, which the Rulers of the Romish Church had from time to time introduced. And this is a plain, though short, account of what we have done.

But now, what plea at all does this give to Dissenters to undo what has been so well and lawfully done, or to withdraw themselves after the completion of such an undertaking? surely none. Let then no idle carping at the *fitness* or *unfitness* of this or that ceremony; no *preference* to any new mode of preaching, prayer, or the like; no objection to the private character or conduct of any *particular Ministers*; let no misrepresentation and false slanders; let nothing, in short, but a persuasion *sincerely and very cautiously*

taken up, that you cannot be saved while you continue a member of the Church, ever make you break the bands of unity and peace. I trust that you will have seen from the foregoing observations that this is not, nor is ever likely to be the case.

Indeed the calumnies which our Church has undergone, are nothing more than a sure testimony of her uprightness. For while on one side the Papists say that she has departed from established authority and order, the various Dissenters among us reproach her that she retains a regular order of worship and ceremony. The one pronounce that by her Reformation she has done far too much, the other upbraid her because she has not gone far enough: the one cry out that she has been misled by a spirit of licentiousness, the other, that she is enslaved by forms and rules. That which is accused by enemies on both sides of contradictory faults, is in general estimation free from both. The Church, in short, fares as *virtue* itself does; which lying equally removed from two opposite extremes, is slandered and reviled by those who are placed in either. It can therefore never appear strange or discouraging that many should defame us. Our blessed Lord's Ministry, and his Church, while it was governed by his inspired Apostles, were no otherwise treated.

I here end this discussion; for it would be a trifling and tedious task to consider all the objections which
ignorant,

ignorant, weak, or perverse men invent against the national Church. I only assert, with a sincere and upright persuasion, that we have ever successfully defended, and are ever ready to defend, both her doctrines and ceremonies against all her enemies; nor do we fear any attack, so long as Reason and Truth shall govern the judgment of mankind.

I am now led on farther to treat of one subject more, which in these fearful times it is become requisite to place before you in a clear and strong light: I mean the general duty of *submission to established authority*. In all times, indeed, men who from dishonest purposes, a lawless or perverse temper, or a vain conceit of their own wisdom, ill brooked the restraints of religious and civil government, have defamed or opposed them. But, of late, such folly and wickedness have most alarmingly increased. At length, however, as we know, they have more particularly excited of late a whole nation to such an outrageous excess, as has exposed them to detection and abhorrence. And by this event, dreadful as it has been and still is, we comfort ourselves with the hope, that the cause of truth and order, both in our own and other countries, will acquire even a greater
and

and a lasting stability. For we have been now, as it were, forced to attend seriously and reflect on the doctrines of this people and those who favour them; and in the end we have been even surprised at their fallacy and shallowness. We have been fully enabled to follow with our eyes the natural tendency and effect of their counsels: and we have shrunk with horror from their guilt and their miseries.

It cannot be denied that the principles which caused the dreadful revolution in France, were at first approved here, as well as elsewhere, by many. They were admired by those who have since been ashamed of their delusion. The pretensions of these reformers of the world in matters of Religion and Government were indeed lofty and attractive. It was reserved for them to restore mankind to Reason and to Liberty. Wisdom, which all the understanding and experience of men, or the divine communications, had ever taught the world in vain, was, it seems, at once discovered by these men, self-taught and self-enlightened. If the utter *impudence* of this pretension does not instantly convict it of the grossest imposture, "then judge ye" of this wisdom by its "*fruits.*" *They* have been displayed before our eyes, and are these—the denial of the Supreme Creator of Heaven and earth!—Hatred and Blasphemy against the blessed Saviour of the world!—Rejection of immortal Life and Happiness beyond the grave!—

On

On the other side of this scene behold the liberty of mankind annihilated!—Justice even renounced—Truth continually violated—Humanity extinguished—and with all these, modesty and decency of manners banished from the land! Fruits worthy of *that* wisdom, by which, as we read, “the world” in former times “knew not God,” (1 Cor. i. 21.) the wisdom of a corrupted nature, the wisdom that is *earthly, sensual, devilish!* (James iii. 15.)

As I assert what cannot be disproved, so I am likewise not afraid that in entering on this subject, I shall pass the bounds of my duty as a Minister of God’s word. In offering you my opinion and advice, I shall follow St. Paul’s example (Rom. 13.) while I shew from plain Reason and from Scripture our obligation to “fear God and the King.”

Wherefore, first, as to *religious subordination*.—Submission in religious matters to the authority of our spiritual rulers has been already shewn to be grounded on that sure rock, the Word of God. We may therefore pass over this part of this subject, since I have also little occasion to prove to you the authority of the Holy Scriptures themselves. Our reverence for them may be shortly stated to rest on the certainty, that the *New Testament* is the very same book which was received by the universal Church of Christ when it was first written, and has been acknowledged by all

all men ever since. For the New Testament itself contains the proof of the Old, because it continually mentions the several parts of it, and quotes passages from them. Since then the Books which we have are genuine and undoubted, the wonderful Prophecies of the Old Testament and the stupendous miracles recorded in the New, together with the undeniable integrity of the eye-witnesses who related them, demonstrate that what they contain is the Word of God. These are the great, immoveable foundations of the Christian's faith. (John iii. 2, 5, 36, 39, 46.) I shall be excused, in a publication like the present, from bringing forward the almost innumerable other proofs which have been added to these, since they are not necessary.

Such an account, my Brethren, we give to those who ask why we are Christians, or willing and orderly members of the Church of Christ: which being so plain and undeniable, what can we think of those men in this country, who in their sentiments or conversation depart from the truth of our holy Religion, or in their practice from its moral duties and its ordinances? Some of these mis-call themselves free-thinkers, men free from prejudices of education, from bigotry and superstition; titles and pretensions certainly ill applied to their case, and not at all belonging to them. Far be it from us to judge harshly of them;

but

but far be it also not to speak the plain and necessary truth. The causes of infidelity and neglect of religious communion are truly these two: first, a blameable indulgence of sensual or worldly inclinations, which being inconsistent with Christianity, first loosens men from it and then incites them against it; secondly, a heart lifted up by pride and shallow self-conceit, which sets them above a just deference to the wisdom and authority of God and man. Surely we can easily imagine how men thus influenced will err from Truth and Reason. It is in vain that the Gospel which we preach, and the Constitution of the Church which is established, are liable, the one to no real, the other to no sufficient objections. Where not only sincerity, (Matt. vi. 22, 23.) but humility also, and a patient steady enquiry into this supreme subject are wanting, lamentable must be the blindness of heart and mind that will follow every consideration of it. What shall I here say? Alas! *how many* of those, whom we *all know*, are there that this censure concerns; who, if they would fairly examine their hearts and conduct, must convict themselves of the wretched unworthy motives that influence them in religious matters! Merciful God! open their eyes ere it be too late! Grant them to see by the examples of others the vile and horrible impiety to which such a state of mind is apt to lead, and in which, if

G

they

they are consistent with themselves, it must terminate, and then the anxiety, dejection, wretchedness, and despair which it tends to cause.*

But as this argument relates chiefly to men of education, I shall only add, that it is not through the want of instruction sufficient for every man, that any remain in a state of ignorance or doubt. Had not insidious or profligate men polluted the pure stream of truth, the Holy Scriptures might have made all men "wise unto salvation." Yet even now, through the labours of such § as have explained and vindicated the doctrines and establishment of our holy Religion, there is abundant security provided against all infidelity and error.

I call your attention next to the duty of Obedience to Civil Government, a duty which the vain pretenders to wisdom, after the example of foreign traitors, endeavour to weaken and undermine. Having cast off the fear of the living God, and an adherence to the doctrines and institutions of their Redeemer, they have also rejected those important

* I have need only to refer the reader to Professor Robison and the Abbé Barruel's publications.

§ Among these, may be justly recommended the short but valuable Treatises, contained in the *Enchiridion Theologicum*, printed at Oxford, 1792.

duties between man and man, which the Creator established for the safety, the comfort, and the advantage of his creatures.

Absurd falsehoods require no long reasoning to detect them. Nor shall I therefore use any such. It will be sufficient to consider the two maxims on which the whole of the *modern wisdom* rests. These are *universal equality*, and the right of *all, high and low, to interfere in the passing of laws, and in the administration of Government.*

1. By *universal equality* is meant that all men are equal *by nature*, and ought to be so *in condition*. If they cannot plead ignorance by way of excuse for this assertion, it will be seen to have been a mischievous, but shallow trick and artifice. They have wilfully mingled truth and falsehood. The right way therefore to detect and expose them, is first to see what is that Truth on this subject, which Reason and the Scripture have made known to us.

It is then surely an *old and acknowledged* truth, that all men are in one respect born equal. "The rich and poor meet together," on this footing of equality, that the same "Lord is the Maker of them all," (Prov. xxii. 2.) They are made of the same common clay, in the same mould, and are all alike gifted with the same immortal spirit. They are all equally by nature entitled to the regard of their Heavenly Father; are all subject to the same

general sentence of death here, and all heirs of the same immortal hope in the life that is to come. This, I repeat it, is the plain doctrine of the Religion which is established among us, and is continually preached by the Ministers of God's word. It is also allowed, fully and freely allowed, among men. We all respect the virtues, applaud the talents, admire every personal excellence of the poorest among us, freely acknowledge their natural equality amid all the other distinctions that subsist among us, and both feel and ever confess the lowest that apply for our assistance to be our brethren and fellow-creatures. The same equality also is acknowledged by the laws of our country. These know no distinction. They denounce one common threatening, and inflict one common punishment on all who offend against public or private right. They consider the crime, and not the person; and, under their universal protection, the virtues, talents, and industry of every one among us are at free liberty to raise him from the poorest condition to a wealthy one, and even to the highest honours attainable by any subject in the kingdom.

And does not this, my Brethren, suffice us? The equal right which an equal nature gives us, we have: we have an equal right to our Life, our Liberty, our Property, and to that which is the dearest Property, our Character and Reputation; and we may without fear improve our condition by every laudable mean to
the

the utmost. And in fact, great is the number indeed of those who, in this happy country, have done so.

All this, let us then remember, these men have not found out; no, not a tittle of it. What indeed is conducive to virtue and happiness, it is but little likely that we should owe to them. Our next consideration is of what these men have been so ignorant or so wicked as not to notice, an *inequality* also in our natural condition. I have no need to prove that there exist *natural differences* among us; differences of health, beauty, strength, agility, and hardness of Body; and, what is more important, of abilities of Mind, in respect of imagination, memory, sagacity, and judgment. Is it then difficult to foresee the natural consequence of this inequality? Must not we all hence expect a difference of success in the affairs of life, and that it is natural for a man of ability in business to raise himself above another who is dull? And now we begin to see the wisdom of these Reformers. But farther; two more causes of inequality in condition are obvious to all. The difference of *moral* qualities, and of character, added to that of natural talents, is the first. What do you think must be the effect of industry, sobriety, temperance, integrity, in contrast with idleness, drunkenness, dishonesty, and profligacy? I do not in this place dwell on the blessing of God on the good, which, yet, is of greater importance than every other consideration.

consideration. The second difference is also a very important one, that of *education*, which, in respect of knowledge and skill, sets one man at a great distance from another. But of this, more presently.

What then do we hence learn? Have men no right to a difference of condition, the effect of natural inequality; of their industry, their virtues, their acquired skill and knowledge? Is it *justice* that determines this not to belong to them? Is it *wisdom* that would check the operation of natural and moral excellence? Will you all, in your several instances, think it right that what nature and your superior industry have procured, you should not have and dispose of as you please; being subject only to the calls of humanity and charity, which require you to relieve according to your ability and opportunities those who are in want; calls, which nature hath prepared us to obey, which the praise and esteem of the world ever second, which the Gospel of Jesus, the law itself of charity, hath most loudly repeated and powerfully sanctified? Is not *this*, as clearly as that the sun shines, the state to which nature and Revelation lead and have ever led mankind; and which, as I shall lastly remark, is so necessary and unavoidable, that if it were overturned by ignorant levellers, it must immediately restore itself, and for ever again take place to the end of the world?

Indeed

Indeed I must now cease to call those men *ignorant*. Their abused followers, whom we pity, may be and indeed often are so. But it is too plain, that the leaders are only the *profligate* enemies of law and order, of God and man. They only do not care for the confusion and calamities that they may cause, provided they may insult those above themselves, and by violence or fraud possess that to which their birth, their talents, and their virtues give them no just title.

But leaving their reasoning and purposes to your contempt and abhorrence, I proceed to the second point, in which the same spirit of falsehood and selfishness has been detected.

2. They say that all have alike a right to interfere in the passing of laws, and even in the administration of Government.* For, it is added, "the Sovereignty rests in the people."

I answer, and I think you will say with me, first, that this is not merely error, for it is absurdity and nonsense. That the governor and governed should
be

* It cannot be thought improper or useless to mention some particulars now or lately claimed and contended for in this kingdom; to name them is to expose their folly and absurdity. Every, the most dependent and ignorant man, is to be individually represented by some Member of the Legislature, or Parliament, whom he is to join in electing: that he is to direct this Representative what laws
he

be the same, or should change places, is a contradiction, and can only end in a destruction of all government whatever. But that I may not be mistaken or misrepresented, let me first remind you, that I have affirmed all men alike to have rights, which nature gives, and Reason and Scripture confirm; a right to life, freedom, property, and reputation. Scripture plainly teaches that the *end of government* is to preserve these, and under this supposition commands obedience. (Rom. xiii. 3, 4.) It therefore does not command it, where the preservation of these may be refused and disclaimed. But it is, as you may remark, with the greatest propriety, silent about that necessity of resistance, which both is dreadful in itself, and in fact is not to be *supposed* in any nation governed by *known and certain laws*.

I shall not now, I hope, be thought to reason ill from Scripture, if I say that those rights are all which *any subject* possesses. The right of governing arises from the *necessity* of subordination, which the *God of Nature* hath imposed, for promoting the welfare, and

he shall be instrumental in enacting, altering, or repealing. He is also entitled to instruct the Government concerning the fitness or unfitness of wars, and treaties of peace and alliance. The people, by which term is also not meant the whole body of the people, are to form a supreme jurisdiction distinct from King or Parliament, and to overawe every legal power in the free exercise of its functions and duties.

preventing

preventing the calamities incident to society. And thus, first, a parent hath authority given him over his children. And either, as it hath been supposed, derived originally from this; or by a similar necessity, which certainly exists in a *State* as well as in a *family*, a *supreme authority* must somewhere be found. It is a sufficient proof of this necessity, that in every nation from the beginning, such an authority, however introduced, has been established. And if we wish farther to know the cause of this necessity, it lies in the weakness and the wickedness of mankind. It is necessary, that the life and liberty of the weak and helpless should be secure from the power of the bad; that what is acquired by honest industry and skill, and preserved by frugality and moderation, should be guarded from the frauds and violence of the rapacious and unjust; that, as much as may be, whatever conduct tends to the improvement of human happiness may be encouraged; and, secondly, that the same security from evils at home, which is thus procured to individuals, should also be obtained for the community at large from the evil attempts of other nations or their subjects. Hence, that offences and their punishment might be certainly known by all, the necessity plainly arises for framing *laws* against crimes, both between man and man, and between different nations. Hence also arises the necessity of

H

a general

a general submission to the power conferred on some person or persons of executing the laws, in order that they may be certainly and regularly executed. And we may take notice, that this power was *at the first* commonly given to *Kings*, who, with the advice of such as they thought most fit, ordered and conducted all the affairs of Government. This we learn out of the Bible, the only authentick record of the earliest ages of the world.* Other histories also bear witness to it. Nor, surely, will such an appointment appear unfit or unnecessary. The common sense and experience of men have ever led them, in all the concerns of life, to similar appointments. Thus they have one commander in chief of armies or fleets; one governor of a town or city; one chief or president in every smaller community; one umpire in disputes, one supreme, in whose decisions others are to acquiesce. But that I may not be drawn farther than I ought into this political discussion, I shall only add, that in the government of a kingdom, whatever objections may be raised against unlimited

* The Jewish nation, until the time of Saul, who was their first king, were under the peculiar visible government of the Almighty himself. "The Lord their God was their King." On this account only it was that they are said to have sinned in desiring to have a king to judge them, *like all the nations.*" 1 Sam. xii. 12. and viii. 5.

authority

authority in the hands of one man, such authority, when it is, even in a great measure, limited by a national council, is free from those objections.

A supreme, a sovereign power, has, therefore, I say, plainly been the *necessary effect* of a *natural cause*; and, wherever *kings* reign, their power is unquestionably the work and ordinance of God, *the author of our nature*. Thus are we to understand his inspired Apostle's doctrine to the Romans: "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers, for there is no power but of God. The powers that be, are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist, shall receive to themselves damnation." (Chap. 13.)* Such is the reasonable penalty annexed to resistance against established authority. For it is, generally, a resistance arising, as the next words shew, not from any good principle, but from a lawless or dishonest mind. "For Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil;" and those who are honest, peaceable, contented, humble, and modest, are always ready and glad to obey. "Against such there is no law." (Gal. v. 23.) To

* It is not impertinent to remark, against such as wish to erect *Republics* in all countries, that the power here meant was the Roman *Emperor*, who derived his succession from one that had changed the democratical form of government into a *Monarchy*. To him, a man of profligate and execrable character, subjection is enjoined under the penalty of damnation.

these, the various *imperfections* of government, since nothing human can be otherwise than imperfect, are no cause of opposition or of seditious demeanour. To them nothing can be so alarming or so odious as any attempt, any conduct, that would endanger the lawful, established constitution of their country. At the prospect of any danger to this, they may indeed reasonably tremble. And round this, the great bulwark of their safety, their rights, their peace, and happiness, all that is good and wise in every nation will ever rally: for it is the greatest blessing, which, next to the glorious hope of heavenly immortality, nature and revelation have bestowed on mankind.

Not so men of another description, and I must again add, such well-meaning men as are duped and inflamed by their artifices. Those who are vain and self-sufficient, men of *little knowledge*, which is worse than *ignorance*, men of aspiring temper and views, especially such as have suffered disappointments; idle, turbulent, discontented men, who wish to throw things into confusion, in order to seize what they cannot peaceably obtain; lastly, men of no fear or regard to God or man—all *these* are naturally opposers of government, and of such as administer it. They care for no consequences to others: they have no tenderness for the lives or welfare of their countrymen, neighbours, or friends; they are regardless of the terrors and miseries which they would bring on all, or
obstinately

obstinately shut their eyes on the prospect. At the same time it is to be remarked, that so wicked and heinous is their crime, that they are compelled to disguise their conduct under false pretences, and thereby add *hypocrisy to wickedness*. They pretend to *reform abuses*, or to *restore the constitution of their country*; nay, when they dare to avow such a purpose, to *establish a better*, boasting themselves to be the only advocates of humanity, patrons of truth and reason, champions of the rights and liberties of mankind. And with such false pretences do they deceive and inflame even men of honest, but unsettled and credulous minds. Religion and government are subjects, which, sincerely and well handled, constitute the happiness of the world. But they are, more than any, capable of being misrepresented. Being so important to all, any thing concerning them engages attention; while, for both these reasons, they continually also afford temptation to men of rash or dishonest minds to tamper with them. And if we meddle with them beyond what our knowledge and experience enable us to judge of them, we instantly become the dupes and tools of the mischievous and designing. The plain, general truths concerning these great subjects are all that concern the bulk of mankind. Of these all of us can judge. We know whether we are secured in our lives, liberty, the safe and peaceable possession of property. With *these* therefore

therefore it is our concern and business to be contented; for *these* are the *ends* of government. Of other matters we may hear much, and for a while may even think that we are made wiser. But should we stay to hear men of equal ability and knowledge argue on both sides of such questions, we should find ourselves utterly at a loss, and unable to decide between them. Let us then, my brethren, I earnestly exhort you, stop at the above limit, where we are as well able to judge for ourselves as the *most learned men*. There we are safe: *our dearest interests in life, our quiet, our innocence* will never be endangered.

Modesty and humility are ever necessary to real wisdom. I leave it therefore, farther, to you to consider the deference due to very many, who are forward to instruct others in political matters. Matters of difficulty require not only good sense and talents, but learning and experience. And those alone are able to understand and conduct them, who have been, first, taught all the effects and consequences of different measures. It was on this part of the subject that I purposed to point out, more particularly, the difference caused by *education* between one man and another.* Education and experience are indispensable towards rendering men skilful in every art, business, or profession in life. Whence it

* Page 54.

may at once be plainly inferred, that, generally, those who pretend to instruct in that most difficult and complicated of all sciences and arts, the science and art of government, of laws and constitutions, are as truly impostors, as we all think ignorant pretenders to medicine to be; and that they deserve no less contempt and derision at our hands: and if *some men* of real political knowledge and experience excite others in a private or lower rank of life to come forward and interfere, I again earnestly warn you of your danger. Be aware of becoming the credulous dupes and tools of their ambition. Let us remember, that we must be unskilled and unable to judge of what we have not learned, and especially of what requires the greatest talents united to the most accurate and comprehensive knowledge. We can easily apprehend these to be requisite in the administration of government, by considering, first, how much is necessary for many men in the narrow circle of their own private concerns; how much, in the case of many opulent men, is required for managing successfully the affairs of a large family, of their various connexions, of all the different concerns of property, of the innumerable details of an extensive commerce, together with all those offices of social and civil life, to which eminence in rank and station continually render such men subject. Education is, in fine, of nearly equal importance with the difference caused by natural

natural ability or the contrary ; I mean that education, which, after some general attainments, is directed to qualify every one for his particular employment.

I am addressing you on a subject, on which it is difficult to stop. But now, leaving the foregoing considerations to your serious notice and reflection, I shall conclude the whole argument by that advice of the wisest of mankind, which is worthy of being continually repeated, " My son, fear thou the Lord and the King, and meddle not with them that are given to change."

Happy Englishmen! on whom the world, convulsed with terror and miseries, now looks with tenfold respect and admiration, if we have the good sense and firmness to preserve our happiness! This all depends on our continuing stedfast in true Religion, and in Loyalty to our King, the supreme Minister of the God whom we serve. He is the Father of his people, the Guardian, not the arbitrary disposer of the laws, which, whatever had been his moral character, must have governed him as well as the meanest of his subjects. And herein are our liberty, our peace and property secure ; since they depend not on the virtues of a Prince, but on the established constitution of our country. Thus alone may we hope for ourselves and children to see in peace those continual

tinual corrections and improvements which human faults and imperfections, and the course of time, and change of circumstances, will ever render necessary; and which, when the *general* voice of a free people asks for them, will never be refused. Thus may we retrieve ourselves from that alarming tendency to *irreligion* and *anarchy*, which have long been spreading themselves fast in Europe, and now threaten to precipitate every kingdom and nation into utter ruin. Thus shall we deliver ourselves from those plausible hypocrites, those factious declaimers, those ignorant leaders, with their deluded followers, whose pretexts are *publick good*, but whose aim is *private advantage*; whose language is *peace*, but whose counsels are *slaughter and ruin*. Let France, let Holland, let Italy and Switzerland testify, that where men of such a description are suffered to take their course, though "the land be as the garden of Eden before them," they will leave it "behind them a desolate wilderness."

Having discussed all the above points at some length, I shall not add much on *the general conduct of your lives*. It seems indeed amply sufficient for recommending the Moral Duties of the Gospel, to name them to you. They are a *supreme regard and*
gratitude

gratitude to Him who *made*, who hath *redeemed*, who *sanctifieth* you; *justice* and *goodness* toward all; *moderation* and *purity* in the government of yourselves. At most, as these are the continual subjects of our discourses to you from the pulpit, I shall only say, that if they are thought by any to be incompatible with the pleasures and advantages of this life, as far as those are truly desirable—much more, if they are thought to detract from cheerfulness and comfort, such men grossly mistake or misrepresent them. At the same time, let me admonish you that they are, both in their own nature, and by the blessing of Him who watcheth over all his works and laws, the only sure and perfect means of procuring present happiness. Disappointments, calamities, and distresses are indeed incident to all, as they are also necessary for all in this state of trial and preparation for a future, eternal life. But we confidently affirm, that if you take due care to understand those duties aright, as they are delivered in the word of God, they truly are, *in their natural and ordinary consequence*, the cause of health, competence, credit, undissembled peace and cheerfulness of mind; and, farther, under all circumstances whatever of calamity, the sure cause of content and resignation. Look into the world, and see for yourselves, whether any other principle or fashion of conduct can, after all its promises, really effect any thing like this. Consider then, as it becomes

becomes men, the *unreasonableness and folly* of adopting any course of life beside that which the all-wise Author of mankind has mercifully revealed for their welfare and happiness. For are we not in truth to regard the laws of God, which his creatures are required to obey, only as the directions and advice of a most benevolent, all-gracious Father, who having created us, and all things with which we are concerned, hath graciously made known to us that course of life and temper of mind, which alone are suitable to our nature and conducive to our good!

There remains but one subject more to be brought before you; and with this I shall conclude. If, then, a real desire of the everlasting benefits of the Gospel, or of the present happiness of mankind, shall excite in you a care of fulfilling its duties, and, perhaps, shall make some of you regret that you have been, formerly, too negligent about them, let me, lastly, intreat those of you that are parents and masters of families, in behalf of your *Children and Servants*. They are under your direction; or are, at least, more subject to your influence than to any other in the world. Let them then receive at your hands *that charity*, without which all other kindness is but mockery; I mean, *instruction and advice*, in order

that they may not miss of *present and eternal happiness*. They are committed by God to your care; and, if you act in this point with *prudence* as well as with *affection*, you have abundant reason to hope the happiest effects from your attention to them. Religion, with all its duties, is to be recommended to them *as it is reasonable*, and “*the one thing needful*” *for every man’s peace and comfort*. Without presenting it, therefore, to their view as a melancholy, a burthensome task, or as slight and ceremonious only; without debarring them from useful, innocent, and moderate recreation; I exhort you to use all likely means of shewing them *why* they should be Christians indeed, and *how* they are to become such. To *children*, it is more obviously the duty of *parents* and *guardians*, and of all to whom the parental office is wholly or in part entrusted, to give such attention; both as it is always necessary, and is generally sure of being successful in their early years. To *servants* it must be afforded variously, according to their several needs and capacities, and other circumstances.

Such servants as are very ignorant, and children, are provided by our Church with an excellent form of instruction in her Catechism. This is the first thing which they ought to learn: nor are they to learn the words only, but either to be instructed by degrees in the meaning of every part, or to
have

have some of those printed explanations put into their hands, of which their Minister may approve. If all this be done, which is surely no difficult task; if they regularly frequent the Church; if by their serious attention to the appointed portions of Scripture, to the prayers, and to the sermon, they confirm and increase their religious knowledge, I see nothing which can be thought farther requisite to christian instruction.

And here I now conclude my Address to you, having said all that appears to be my duty in this way to lay before you: and I intreat you to believe me, when I solemnly say, that nothing but my sincere and firm persuasion, that your welfare both here and hereafter is involved in the subjects I have explained, could have induced me to write this address. May the God and Father of all, before whom we all live, by whom our few days on this earth are numbered, open our eyes so that we “may see the things which belong to our peace;” that, having lived together as faithful members of his Church on earth, we may meet again, the joyful partakers of his glorious kingdom in Heaven, for ever and ever. AMEN.

Finis.



By the same Author,

EIGHT SERMONS,

PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,

IN THE YEAR 1791,

AT

The Lecture founded by the Rev. John Bampton.

ALSO,

A SERMON,

PREACHED BEFORE THE SAME UNIVERSITY,

June 11, 1792.



